



## **Information for prospective short stay/residential volunteers for the 2010 season**

### Background

Volunteer work forms an integral part of the Felin Uchaf project (pronounced *Veleen Uchav* and is Welsh for *Upper Mill*) and since the centre was established 6 years ago hundreds of volunteers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds from all parts of the world have come to help with the various building, land and conservation projects. All the centre's staff were voluntary for the first 2 year, since then we have sought grant funding to support salaried staff to coordinate the different aspects of the work from admin to practical skills training. At present there is one full-time Project Manager, 3 sessional staff who tutor the skills training workshops and several part time volunteer staff who coordinate the community arts and gardening projects.

All the work of transforming the formerly derelict farm: landscaping, tree planting, raising new hedges and digging ponds, laying footpaths, bridges, raising buildings, repairing the old farmhouse and a host of other jobs have all been accomplished by teams of dedicated volunteers. This first development phase of the project – when all the new facilities are being built and the gardens are being established, will see us through to around 2014 and has been planed so as to maximise the opportunities for volunteer involvement. The work itself is as varied as the people who come here – from helping to prepare meals & baking & housekeeping duties to thatching and oak carpentry. Over the past 2 years we've tried to tailor the work to suit the groups and individuals requesting to volunteer here, with occasionally up to 16 people staying at the Centre at any one time.

This year were going to focus our energies into two main building projects and begin generating more of our income from fee paying courses and activities. There have been funding cuts across the board and our charity is feeling the pinch as much as most of our partners. We have fewer paid staff to teach and coordinate the projects this year ( unless were awarded new funding in the interim) and so we are particularly keen to involve volunteers who may already have some prior skills in the kind of work we'll be doing. The oak barn project especially, is an opportunity for volunteers to gain valuable carpentry experience rarely come by and we are looking for a few people who would like to commit themselves to longer periods to learn to carry out this highly skilled work proficiently.

Volunteers may stay at the Centre for anything between a couple of days to a maximum of 3 months, pending a monthly review of progress. Students on work experience will be asked to contribute £5 a day towards their keep and the extra staff supervision required





**All the work is physically demanding and you need to have a good back!** Both cobbing and basic stone walling are skills that can be learned fairly quickly and are very satisfying jobs to do. There will generally be sessional staff at hand to offer tuition and oversee the building work.

### The Cruck Oak-Framed Barn/workshop



Two years ago we were able to source some 50 tons of oak and larch trees from a woodland management project at a nearby nature reserve. The timber has been beamed and planked and stacked ready for the next stage of framing and raising a new thatched workspace over the next 3 years. The building of a spacious and well equipped workshop will enable us to host year round rural skills and crafts courses and more arts activities. We've been awarded funding for the capital costs of constructing the frame and we'll be running the project as an opportunity for learning:

- stone walling and masonry skills with the building of the initial stone/slate foundations (summer 2010 )
- green oak timber framing- using a range of traditional and modern tools and methods.( May 2010 on for 2 years)
- roofing-reed thatching ( 2012)
- internal fixtures and fittings skills ( 2012/13)
- carpentry and joinery and furniture making skills for furnishing the interior.

You can get an idea of what's involved in the different stages of construction through going to the *Workshops* page on our website [www.felinuchaf.org](http://www.felinuchaf.org) on page <http://212.67.202.77/~waenllyneu/felinuchaf/1/courses.htm>

The construction will be run as skills workshops for both volunteers and through a programme of fee paying 3-5 day courses. The fee paying courses differ from the ongoing volunteering in as much as there will be much more focused teaching of the range of techniques and use of tools.

## Other ongoing projects

- The Organic Community Garden and herb garden



There's always plenty to do in the gardens from hoeing to harvesting for meals, making raised beds and cutting the grass. The ambience and earthiness of the garden work can be a replenishing change from the building work. Some people may focus their efforts on the building only and some on a bit of both. We aim to farm biodynamically where possible it reflects the centre's ethos and approach to all the work, if you're interested to find out more about biodynamics you can visit [www.biodynamic.org.uk](http://www.biodynamic.org.uk) . A volunteer coordinator will direct and oversee the garden project.

*The following are lower priority and may well pass to next year*

- building new access paths around the land
- constructing a new sluice gate for the pond
- clay and then lime plastering over the wattle and daubed interior of the new roundhouse
- building an oak framed porch/balcony for the new roundhouse
- slating the new notice board conical roof frame
- building an outside cooking area including a clay bread oven
- building an earth walled & thatched compost toilet and shower room- roundhouse





- **The Farmhouse**



There's a 19<sup>th</sup> century stone built farmhouse where we have our offices, an exhibition room ,the only kitchen and bathroom on site at present, a small dining/ living room with open fire and two small shared bedrooms with bunk beds to sleep 2 plus 2/3. It's basic but quite homely and in the summer there's a lot of coming and going through the house. The same goes for the entire Centre – those wishing more privacy and quiet will need to bring their own tents to pitch away from the main activity areas. Between October and April it would be too basic and chilly for most people in the farmhouse so the 4 beds are available between April and end of September.

The small kitchen has a sink, an electric cooker, fridge, storage cupboards and worktops with plenty of pots and pans and plates and cutlery etc. and large sealed tubs for further food storage

The bathroom has a washbasin and bath ( with hot water via an emersion heater) with a detachable shower head.

There is a washing machine at the centre & clothes line



- **The Volunteer Roundhouse**



A thatched ,18 feet internal diameter, Celtic -style roundhouse in a sheltered part of the fields by the stream. There are raised wooden benches all around the inside with storage for rucksacks etc beneath and mattresses to sleep 6- it is possible to accommodate another 2 on the floor, on other beds and we do so regularly for short periods of stay – but it does get a bit too cramped with 8/10 sharing in there!

There's no heating other than a portable gas heater for cold nights in early spring – but it is quite warm under the thick thatched roof and within the wattle and daubed, limewashed walls. It's about 5 minutes walk to the farmhouse for the bathroom and kitchen. there's a timber deck/balcony just outside with benches for sitting. We do have plans to connect up the underfloor heating when the solar panels are up but that will be next year....

By the end of this summer we aim to have the second thatched volunteer roundhouse ready to sleep another 6 and a compost toilet and shower/wash room nearby.

- **Camping**

Volunteers are welcome to pitch their own tents in the stock free fields or in the newly planted woodland areas.

As were creating new habitats to attract more wildlife we discourage volunteers from bringing dogs.

**What you should bring**

warm clothes, waterproofs, workwear & sturdy boots, sleeping bag, towel & toiletries, hat & sun – cream & swimming stuff if you want to take an evening swim in the nearby bays

Work gloves and protective clothing/ goggles etc are provided.



## **Telephone & Internet**

There is limited mobile reception on site , the office telephone is to be used for essential calls only

Office's internet access by arrangement only and is locked out of office working hours.

## **Timetable**

Generally we expect residential volunteers to help with whatever jobs need doing at the centre from Monday to Friday. Weekends are free unless you'd like to join in with one of the community events on *the Spring-Autumn Activities & Events Programme* ( no charge for residential volunteers for most events )

9.30am start work

11.30 tea break

1.00 shared lunch

3.00 tea break

4.30pm put away tools.

There will be a rota drawn up for tea making, cooking lunch and washing-up ( 2 different people each day) and everyone shares in a whole-house clean first thing on Monday morning

Volunteers arrange their own breakfast and supper times and cooking arrangements

## **Food**



We provide basic vegetarian food requirements. The nearest shop is 4 miles away at the small village of Aberdaron where there's a Spar and nice bakery. From May onward there'll be fresh organic vegetables and salads from the garden to supplement meals and there's good mackerel fishing off the nearby rocks from May to the end of August. If volunteers wish to have meat and more speciality foods they will need to purchase these items themselves. We usually do a weekly main shopping trip

to Pwllheli 12 miles/30 minutes drive away and several runs a week into Aberdaron for fresh bread and milk.

The nearest cash point and banks are at Abersoch 8 miles away and at Pwllheli 12 miles away

There are 2 pubs, restaurants and cafes at the seaside village of Aberdaron 4 miles west.

## Travel

The Centre is in a remote rural location on the Llyn Peninsula, on the North Western coast of Gwynedd it's what makes it such a special place . The journey here will take you through some of the most varied and beautiful scenery anywhere – with the best saved till last!



- **Train**

By train you'll need to come along the Cambrian Coast line from Birmingham New Street Station to Machynlleth onward to Pwllheli. For train times go to

[http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1021/T5\\_Pwllheli\\_Birmingham\\_21.pdf](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1021/T5_Pwllheli_Birmingham_21.pdf)

Then: either arrange with the centre for a pick-up from the station if its out of bus hours or:

- **Bus**

From Pwllheli take the No 17 or 17B Aberdaron bound bus and ask to stop at Rhoshirwaun, at the Felin Uchaf Centre signpost. The bus trip from Pwllheli to Rhoshirwaun is around 30 minutes .From this stop its a 10 minute walk following the brown and white road signs to the centre. For bus times go to [http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1010/17\\_17B.pdf](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1010/17_17B.pdf)

- **By Car**

Make your way to Pwllheli either via the A55 to Bangor if your coming from the North or Midlands then south west along the A487 or, if you're coming from the South come via the A470



to join the Pwllheli bound A487. From Pwllheli its a 30 minute drive along the westbound A499 to Llanbedrog then right along the B4415 and 4413 all the way to the village of Rhoshirwaun where you'll see a sign for the Felin Uchaf Centre directing you to take a left (at the yellow chapel) then follow the signs a mile down the lane to the centre. You can see the map if you Google the Centre's postcode LL538HS ( <http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?hl=en&tab=w1> ) though the postcode is common to several nearby properties – but you should see the Felin Uchaf Centre signs by then.

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All the other information that *you'll need to look at before deciding to come here*, is on the [Volunteer Policy Statement](#) attached or downloadable from our website page <http://212.67.202.77/~waenllyneu/felinuchaf/1/contribute.htm>

